

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to stress the importance today of our partnership with the people of Afghanistan.

The 9/11 attacks were planned in Afghanistan, and a number of those who planned it are still at large, including Osama bin Laden. President Hamid Karzai's leadership is vital, as is his continuing work to bring stability and security to Afghanistan; he is an important ally in the global war on terrorism. Unfortunately, reports suggest that progress in Afghanistan continues to be undermined by Taliban and terrorist forces operating out of Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow Afghanistan to become a failed state again; therefore, we must ensure that terrorist operations in Afghanistan stop and terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens across the border in Pakistan are eliminated. And we need more cooperation from Pakistan. Let's not neglect the situation in Afghanistan. We do so at our peril.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION NOT PREPARED TO SEND TROOPS TO IRAQ WITH PROPER SUPPLIES

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, as we know, President Bush wants to send another 22,000 young American men and women into harm's way in Iraq in the face of overwhelming opposition, even within his own party and his own administration. Now we are learning that the military does not have all the equipment needed to safely send these troops to Iraq. The Washington Post reported last week that the increase in troop levels will create major logistical hurdles for the Army and Marine Corps, which are short thousands of vehicles, armor kits and other equipment. Even the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development said, "We don't have the armor kits and we don't have the trucks," and it will take months for the Army to obtain the necessary supplies.

This is simply one more piece of evidence that the administration's proposal to increase troops in Iraq is terribly misguided. It is another example of how the rhetoric of supporting the troops is not matched by the reality.

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FORMER BORDER PATROL AGENTS IGNACIO RAMOS AND JOSE COMPEAN

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, you know, we are discussing national security every single day on the floor of this House, and our Border Patrol agents seem to be the forgotten sol-

diers fighting this war on terror. They guard our border every single day and protect our country from terrorists, from human traffickers, from drug traffickers.

Former Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean were recently convicted of shooting a drug smuggler while they were patrolling and protecting the border. Then they were sentenced to a decade in prison. You may have read that our own U.S. Attorney had this drug smuggler brought from Mexico, gave him immunity to testify against our agents, and then the smuggler was released.

Now the drug smuggler is suing the U.S. Government for damages. As soon as Agent Ramos began his sentence in a Federal prison, he was assaulted by drug smugglers and drug users who were inmates in that prison. Ramos was doing his duty, protecting Americans from the thugs and the drug smugglers. Now we have failed to protect him.

BUSH WANTS TO MAKE TAX CUTS FOR WEALTHY PERMANENT WHILE INCREASING TAXES ON 30 MILLION

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, last month during his State of the Union message, President Bush said that it is possible to balance the budget without raising taxes, but that is not the case. The President's health care proposal would increase taxes on more than 30 million Americans.

You didn't hear that during the State of the Union address, but the President wants to tax Americans who have what he calls gold-plated health coverage. The overwhelming majority of these Americans are middle class workers who oftentimes accepted better health care coverage over pay increases during negotiations with their employers. Many of these workers either need the substantial coverage for themselves or a sick family member.

The President's tax increase proposal is the latest assault on employer-provided health care. Employers with older and sicker workers pay higher insurance premiums, not because they have gold-plated insurance, but because their insurance companies charge them for more coverage. At a time when 1 million more Americans are becoming uninsured every year, the administration should not provide employers another reason to drop their health care coverage for their workers.

HOPE SHINES AFTER THE DISASTER

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, a deadly tornado inflicted

enormous damage in my Congressional district. Yet even in the darkest times, the victims of the storm were enveloped in the incredible generosity of its neighbors. By Saturday, over 1,400 volunteers provided 22,000 meals and snacks and distributed 1,000 health kits.

Tim Miller and his three sons helped the Suggs family gather their belongings after the storm left. Tim Miller said, "I'm just doing what I can to help."

Villages resident Al Seiden said, "Despite our house being destroyed . . . if you look around, there are at least eight people, volunteers, friends and neighbors who have come in and helped us . . . The spirit of this community is unbelievable."

Wendy Spencer, the COE of the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism adds, "We are receiving so many offers to help, which is wonderful. Our goal is to maximize this generosity to be as effective as it can be for meeting the needs of the tornado survivors now and in the weeks and months to come."

Congratulations to all these volunteers. Great job.

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge American Heart Month, which is observed each year throughout February. I anticipate that many of my colleagues will attend events in their districts commemorating Heart Month, as I will.

As we do, I urge all of us to pay special attention to the effects of heart disease on women. The good news is that heart disease deaths are beginning to decline among women.

The bad news remains, however, that heart disease is still the number one killer of women in this country. Although awareness among women about their risks for heart disease is increasing, awareness remains particularly low among minority women.

Let's take the opportunity during American Heart Month to talk with the women in our lives and in our community about their risks for heart disease and the preventive steps they can take to decrease these risks.

SUPPORT THE METHAMPHETAMINE REMEDIATION RESEARCH ACT OF 2007

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 365, the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2007. In Minnesota, methamphetamine usage has increased dramatically over the past decade. With that being said, legislators, law